Conduit or Cul-de-Sac?
Information Flow in Civil-Military Operations

By MICHAEL M. SMITH *and* MELINDA HOFSTETTER

Marine speaking with Bedouin, Kuwait.

DOD (Mike Wentzel)

Lieutenant Colonel Michael M. Smith, USAR, is the policy officer at the Center for Operations, Plans and Policy, U.S. Special Operations Command, and Major Melinda Hofstetter, USMC, is senior Marine Corps advisor and a faculty member at the Joint Military Intelligence College.

nformation sharing, closer cooperation—how often do we hear these terms in connection with the relationships between the Armed Forces and foreign militaries, international agencies, and nongovernmental organizations? We debate their implications during exercises and at conferences. But is this development reaching the field? How can commanders ensure that junior officers and noncommissioned officers foster relations with their counterparts? How can communications be improved to relieve the increasingly crowded joint and combined humanitarian/peace operations process and aid in mission accomplishment?

Even well trained combat units will not be ready for the change in perceptions, attitudes, operating tempo, and activities required in civil-military operations (CMOs) and military operations other than war (MOOTW) without additional training. Warfighting skills do not transfer directly to peace operations, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, or many other CMO/MOOTW missions. Much of this problem is institutional. The military tends to regard these missions as aberrations that will not endure. Moreover, they simply do not like to perform them. Thus experiences and lessons learned often are not properly captured. (The British have a similar problem; they refer to lessons identified, that is, lessons only to be forgotten and reidentified later.) There are many recorded instances of soldiers having to reinvent the wheel because they could not find appropriate documentation. The problem is exacerbated by the normal rotation of personnel whereby we lose institutional knowledge and skills.

This article recounts problems faced by battalion through brigade-sized units operating in a multinational arena in support of CMOs. Although most MOOTW are also CMOs, the emphasis is placed on relationships among military staffs

Report Documentation Page

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE **1999**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-1999 to 00-00-1999**
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Conduit or Cul-de-Sac? Information Flow in Civil-Military Operations**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **National Defense University,Institute for National Strategic Studies,260 5th Avenue SW Fort Lesley J. McNair,Washington,DC,20319**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**6**	

(particularly the intelligence function), international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). While it offers a reference for commanders and senior staff officers, it incorporates educational and training material intended for junior officers and noncommissioned officers.

Intelligence Phobia

In a recent study Andrei Raevsky points out that intelligence is critical to any military operation, especially peace operations. Yet collecting it may be regarded as secretive, subversive, and hostile and thus often is seen outside the military as inconsistent with peacekeeping which is supposedly conducted impartially. But Raevsky views peace operations without intelligence as being "blind, deaf, and brainless."[1] He emphasizes the special challenge of peacekeeping missions:

information is difficult to characterize because of its complexity and uniqueness

> *Because of its escalatory potential, this type of operation requires a much more complex intelligence capability which, besides providing the essential intelligence support for the peacekeeping mission proper, continuously keeps track of all activities in the area affecting the peacekeeping operation and updates the intelligence picture needed for possible combat actions and the likely resulting escalation.*

Moreover, in looking at insurgencies throughout history and how they were defeated (or how insurgents defeated those in power), we find that intelligence played a key role whether it was "evaluating moral effects, denoting how the political situation might be transformed, or gauging what might induce guerrillas to cease fighting and negotiate."[2] This analysis can be extended to virtually every CMO.

Know Your Mission

The days when one knew one's enemy—or ally for that matter—are all but over. Even the basic Clausewitzean construct of war has changed. The destruction of enemy military power may not be the object at all. One principle found in the Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual* of the 1930s is now widely accepted. Warfare must transcend material destruction of property and populations to deal with the underlying economic, sociological, religious, and ethnic issues of society at large. The operational objective in the 1930s as today was not to kill noncombatants but to bend them to our will and prevent them from obstructing the mission. Yet operational doctrine does not support broadly-based MOOTW training that fully addresses such matters.

Multidimensional tasks facing the Armed Forces have expanded. Traditional doctrine was focused on defending the Nation against a global competitor, disposing with regional threats, and providing short-term crisis support such as noncombatant evacuation operations. The military now confronts new formulations of national interest. These more frequent but less traditional missions "encompass a wide range of combined and joint military operations beyond peacetime engagements and short of major theater wars," according to *Strategic Assessment 1998*. Mission success is rare when the military is asked to assist either failing or failed states characterized by domestic turmoil, transnational threats, terrorism, drugs, environmental problems, and disease. Further challenges arise in disengagement and stabilization, prisoner exchange, demobilization and weapons control, mine clearance, humanitarian relief, dislocated civilians, internal political cooperation, monitoring elections and democratization, policing and criminal justice, civil and social order, and economic restoration. Parties to conflicts include not only traditional militaries but paramilitaries, insurgents, organized gangs, and warlords. Some questions must be asked up front: What do we want to do? How is mission accomplishment defined? What is the strategy? Who is in charge? Most of these questions are political and must be answered because they determine the boundaries of operations.

The exchange of information in MOOTW and CMOs—including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations—is difficult to characterize because of its complexity and uniqueness. The political, humanitarian, and military dimensions must be coordinated. Yet neither the military nor international organizations nor NGOs tend to coordinate well with each other. Such terms as coordination, cooperation, and consensus building have become familiar in multinational settings such as humanitarian emergencies, but are infrequently operationalized in the field. Integration of information might be a more appropriate term on the operational level.

Building trust and confidence through face-to-face interaction is significant in information integration and can be accomplished relatively easily one-on-one at worker level. Unity of effort implies that each actor touched by a operation is in accord with mission objectives and is striving toward a consensus, works toward the common good, and recognizes that integrating information is in everyone's best interest.

Making an Unholy Alliance Holy

It can take time to convince NGOs that the military shares its goal and is there to cooperate. Thus both the military and NGO community

Humanitarian
assistance operation
exercise, Kenya.

often go about accomplishing the mission differently. The military seeks to stabilize the situation in the short term by establishing a secure environment, stopping hunger, setting up temporary shelters in the face of natural disasters, or otherwise easing humanitarian pressures. International organizations and NGOs, on the other hand, have dealt for decades with humanitarian situations such as poverty, underdevelopment, disease, and starvation. They have not viewed the security environment as bipolar and east-west, but often as multifaceted and north-south in origin. Consequently, the military has a different impetus from the outset.

Civilian organizations take a long-term approach. They are frequently in the area well before the military and remain much longer. In Kosovo, for example, some international organizations and NGOs have been on the ground for three years.

International organizations and NGOs are not homogenous. The single leader concept used by the military is difficult for them because each group has its own objectives. Some are politically based while others are politically biased. Some are faith or advocacy based and all are constituency supported. Collectively they have no coherent structure or shared vision to pull them together as do the Armed Forces—sometimes a strength since the NGO hierarchy is not subject to bureaucratic layering and political crosscurrents. Moreover, there is competition for publicity, which translates into fundraising. Yet NGOs share with the military such collaborative principles as a strong moral imperative, professionalism, and a respect for life. Moreover, the military must realize that many NGO and international organization workers have had more field experience than

most company grade officers and senior noncommissioned officers. The derogatory phrase "herding cats," which alludes to NGO and international organization workers as an uncontrollable yet monolithic block of tree-huggers, is misplaced and should be abandoned.

The military and NGOs must acknowledge the differences in their respective approaches while recognizing their commonalitites. They must remember that an enemy may not be attackable in a traditional sense. The enemy may be hunger or disease. Accordingly dialogue is imperative. It benefits both sides to share information they have collected in order to work toward the common goal of mission accomplishment—which may either be short term from the military standpoint or long term for NGOs.

A Role for Intelligence

Although the military tends to think of NGOs in connection with humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, most relief organizations regard those sort of operations as sideshows to long-term infrastructure development. Participants in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions are thus programmed by cultural predilections and process information. Language is another complication. While English may be the common language of international operations, specialized terminology and acronyms inhibit communication within the military. Many civilians can confront a confusing fog of war when trying to communicate with the military in the field.

the more information that can be shared, the greater the chance of mission success

Moreover, one might assume in communicating with allies and other foreign nationals that they share identical values when in fact they do not. Information is processed either visually or aurally through subconscious filters, opening lines of communication requires prolonged exposure to foreign cultures and skills difficult to nurture within the military.

Information Sharing

As part of the pre-deployment work-up for a mission, both intelligence officers and others on every level gather information on the anticipated environment, including an in-depth awareness of the surroundings and players to be encountered. The process can be assisted by a sound human intelligence base, although that is an acknowledged deficiency in the intelligence field. Owing to declining assets for information/intelligence sources, a clear and up-to-date read on local attitudes and customs may not be available. Some voids can nonetheless be filled through open

sources: the media, NGOs, the Department of State, Web sites, and both American and foreign agencies and organizations such as the United Nations. Another source is local and regional news, especially that of the opposition and fringe factions which may oppose U.S. presence.

Everyone connected to the area of operation can act as eyes and ears. Relief workers now operate on both sides of the conflictive zone rather than only in government-held territory, giving them access to more area than the military. They can provide insights on the atmosphere of a place or incident. But their own agendas may bias such accounts; therefore their observations must be evaluated to ensure that their description of the situation is founded on reliable information.

Not everyone will share information equally; yet the military must be forthcoming whether or not it receives information back in kind. The Armed Forces must realize that civilian members of nongovernment organizations are under no obligation to share information and may in fact view cooperation with the military negatively. Yet the more information that can be shared, the greater the situational awareness, and the greater the chance of mission success.

Despite widespread assumption that the Armed Forces and NGOs have different missions, acknowledging their commonality, for example, that their mutual goal is "securing the safety of the local population," will likely lead to a freer flow of information. Toward that end, it is imperative to find the right medium for exchanging ideas. It may not be possible to formalize links between the military and NGOs, but that may not be necessary or desirable. Informal bonds can be forged through professional or social contacts, under the auspices of other organizations, or by exploiting commonalities. Intelligence personnel can confer with the same sources that NGOs and the media use to form their opinions. This offers insight into, for instance, how the media reports certain events.

In addition, sharing information can be complicated by the problems of interoperability, rules of engagement, and terminology. Information sharing must take place on both the headquarters and field levels. NGOs can share information on either a formal or ad hoc basis. Sharing can also occur at regular intergovernmental meetings such as those conducted by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. When there is military involvement, the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) provides a vehicle for military-to-NGO meetings. Finally, Web sites such as

Sources

[This compilation of sources was selected to assist junior staff officers in organizing the overwhelming flow of information and supplement informational gaps prior to a deployment.]

InterAction—American Council for Voluntary International Action (http://www.interaction.org). The goal of this coalition of over 150 NGOs is assisting in humanitarian efforts worldwide. The Web site has hotlinks to other NGO sites and a *Disaster Response Internet Directory* with links to the United Nations, U.S. Agency for International Development, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, other governmental sites, news services, and NATO resources. There are listings for situation reports that provide country-specific lists of NGOs and their activities in crisis areas. Planners can learn ahead of time who is already there, make initial contact with the U.S. office, and get a more accurate picture of what is happening on the ground. InterAction also publishes *Monday Developments*, a biweekly electronic and hard-copy newsletter on humanitarian activities worldwide and the crises driving them.

ReliefWeb (http://www.notes.reliefweb.int). Sponsored by U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ReliefWeb offers "up-to-date information collected from over 170 sources on complex emergencies and natural disasters. Users from over 150 countries access an average of 200,000 documents each month." There is also an on-line archive of sitreps from OCHA and other U.N. agencies that cover over 800 natural disasters.

Integrated Regional Information Network (accessible through ReliefWeb). Also OCHA-managed, IRIN provides daily and weekly information on regional problems of the Caucasus, Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. It collects data from governments, local and international NGOs, U.N. agencies, and other sources. By its own account, "the networks try to stimulate an esprit de corps among the diverse disciplines (political, humanitarian, legal, military, and media) responding to the complex emergencies affecting the regions they cover."

U.S. Agency for International Development (www.info.usaid.gov/resources/). This is one of many USAID Web sites entitled "Development Links." The page lists sites of those agencies and organizations involved in humanitarian and development activities around the world. There are lists of U.S. Government agencies, embassies, NGOs, and PVOs; InterAction's list of NGO sites, international and regional organizations, and conferences; and a general reference information list.

U.N. High Commission for Refugees (www.unhcr.ch/). Web site containing, among other things, briefing notes on refugee crises worldwide, press releases, country updates, and special UNHCR newswire service. A "what's new" page has information which goes back two months.

Greater Horn Information Exchange (http://gaia.info.gov/HORN). Web site features reports, fact sheets, field guides, activity summaries, data sets, scientific papers, and analyses of east/central African nations in crisis. Maps and sitreps are available as well as disaster histories.

Sphere Project (http://www.ifrc.org/pubs/sphere). Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response is an attempt by a consortium of organizations to develop their version of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance *DART Handbook* and UNHCR handbooks. Seven chapters discuss water, sanitation, shelter, and food aid. There are also sections on an NGO code of conduct and code of best practice. Includes analysis standards, indicators, warning signs, and recommendations for prevention and mitigation; excellent references, very easy to read and use.

Joint Publication 3-57 [draft], *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations* (http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usacsl/org/pki/new_pki.htm). U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute hosts a Web site for the draft joint CMO document that replaces Joint Pub 3-57, *Joint Doctrine for Civil Affairs*, which was too limited in scope. Review and comments are encouraged. U.S. Special Operations Command is lead agency; the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School is executive agent.

Generic Intelligence Requirements Handbook (April 1995, MCIA–1540–002–95). Published by the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, this is an extremely useful pocket-sized handbook that can be used to "determine gaps of information . . . as a brevity code to efficiently request information . . . and as a baseline support tool for intelligence centers providing operational intelligence to forward deployed units." MCIA also publishes the *Urban Generic Information Requirements Handbook*, focusing on the urban setting in which many of tomorrow's emergencies are expected to arise.

UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies. Part one includes some of the features covered in the *Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Handbook.* Contains chapter on site selection for refugee camps in the early stages of an emergency, considering everything from water supply to soil conditions to land rights. Appendices cover topics from needs assessment and immediate responses to refugee health care to hand drawn diagrams of wells and latrines. Section on NGO coordination as well as corruption in emergencies when large sums of money and supplies are being distributed. Part two contains handy information such as an emergency office supply list, emergency field kit list, and guidelines for media relations and coordination with local governments. Interesting from UNHCR viewpoint and has overlapping data that intelligence officers and others will find useful.

JFQ

Building community center in Basseterre, St. Kitts.

1st Combat Camera Squadron (Chris Steffen)

the Integrated Regional Information Network, ReliefWeb, and the USAID Famine Early Warning System are available. Each of these information sharing platforms may be susceptible to cultural differences and field requirements that vary from crisis to crisis.

Security, changing needs in a given environment, or a sudden impending mass movement of civilians can greatly affect when and how relations between actors on the humanitarian playing field are sustained. For instance, though CMOCs are proven venues for military-to-NGO sharing, a lot more goes on in a decentralized fashion outside of them than inside. In Somalia, for example, coordination took place at the separate humanitarian relief sectors, often hundreds of miles from CMOC. Each dealt with the local level of violence, clans and sub-clans, and other issues. Coordinated, coherent responses were not forthcoming from the centralized response system.

Operators and analysts should take advantage of existing networks for information sharing. Formal networks include embassies, government ministries, political movements, and international organizations such as NGOs. Traditional if informal networks include local press, television, and radio along with international media (such as the Voice of America and BBC). Informal sources include taxi drivers, street hawkers, market vendors, and the local populace. Further understanding is obtainable through observing such factors as ethnic or tribal relationships, differences between civil and military compensation, whether there are soup kitchens, and what is being sold in second-hand markets (noncritical goods such as jewelry and carpets or critical goods such as pots and pans). These indicators give insight into the coping mechanisms of a population and a more definitive assessment of a deteriorating situation; yet they often go unexplored. There will always be the concern to protect intelligence sources and methods, but a wealth of information can be gathered just by using one's eyes and ears in the operational area. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] Andrei Raevsky, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Aspects of Psychological Operations and Intelligence* (Geneva: U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996), p. 2.
[2] David M. Keithly, "Leading Intelligence in the 21st Century: Past as Prologue?" *Defense Intelligence Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 1998), p. 85.